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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 000343

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/10/2014

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SUBJECT: CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC) - DG PFIRTER'S
READ-OUT ON HIS DISCUSSIONS IN LIBYA

REF: THE HAGUE 282

Classified By: ERIC M. JAVITS, AMBASSADOR TO THE OPCW. REASONS: 1.5 (B
, D)

This is CWC-16-04.

1. (C) SUMMARY: OPCW Director General Pfirter was very pleased with the outcome of his February 5 discussions in Libya, which included a meeting with the Foreign Minister. Pfirter utilized the visit to emphasize the OPCW's desire to work with Tripoli to meet the requirements of the CW Convention, and to introduce his team to Libyan interlocutors. The DG found the Libyans cooperative, and very well-briefed by the U.S. and U.K. on CWC requirements. The next OPCW team will be arriving in Tripoli on February 16 and the DG anticipates holding an inspection in Libya on or around March 10. The DG also noted that an Italian team of experts will be visiting Libya beginning February 15. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) On February 9, DG Pfirter briefed Ambassador Javits and U.K. Ambassador Budd on the results of his February 5 discussions in Tripoli. Pfirter said he was extremely pleased with the talks, having emphasized that the OPCW wants to work cooperatively with the Libyans on their CWC obligations, and finding the Libyans ready to reciprocate. Pfirter said he made clear that the OPCW would work to complement the U.S./UK efforts under way, and thought an atmosphere of trust had been established with the Libyans. The Libyans, commented the DG, had been well-briefed on what to expect from the OPCW delegation. The goal was therefore to allow the Libyans to become familiar with the OPCW staff with whom they would be working. However, he also made clear to the Libyans that on the specific issue of destruction of Libyan CW stocks, Tripoli needed to discuss this matter with the U.S. and U.K.

3. (C) The DG said that the next step would be a visit by a team of experts led by Verification Director Reeps. The team would arrive late on February 16 and then meet with the U.S./U.K. team in-country to receive a de-brief. Reeps and his team would begin consultations with the Libyans on February 18. The focus of the visit would be on achieving the most comprehensive Libyan declaration possible when that document is submitted by March 6.

4. (C) Pfirter said that his visit had been "hijacked" from the Libyan MFA by General Mahmood, who heads the relevant national research institute. Mahmood arranged for the OPCW team to meet with an interagency group of some 20 individuals. Pfirter then met with the Libyan Foreign Minister. In both cases, he conveyed the message of cooperation noted above. With the FM, he turned to the issue of inspections, commenting that while past practice could have allowed the OPCW to wait three months before sending an inspection team, that would not be a good sign of the seriousness with which the OPCW views Libyan accession.

5. (C) Instead, the DG thought that it would be best to send an inspection team at the earliest possible time. Pfirter stressed to the FM that there would be substantial interest in the status of activity with Libya at the OPCW's Executive Council session on March 23-26. The DG therefore encouraged the Foreign Minister to send a team of both political officials and technical experts to the EC gathering. The FM, reported Pfirter, did not respond on that particular point, but in general was very supportive and interested in the work of the OPCW. The DG said his message was one of trying to assist Libya in meeting the requirements of the CWC, and, in the view of the DG, the message went down very well.

6. (C) Following on the point regarding the "hijacking" of his visit, the DG commented that there had been some logistical difficulties with the trip, and the Libyan MFA had told the DG that they would control the next visit. They also emphasized that they will have more of a coordinating role in the future, and in that respect, the Libyans made

statements about seeking to enlarge their mission in the Hague.

17. (C) The Italians, added the DG, are also sending a team to Libya in the near future. The focus of the discussions would be on the Italian work on Rabta, although it would also touch on issues such as destruction of Libyan CW stocks. (Note: The Italian delegation to the OPCW subsequently confirmed that their team would be arriving in Tripoli on Sunday, February 15, with their experts staying in-country for about a week. End Note.) Reeps said that the Libyans are still thinking about the options for methods of destruction of their CW stocks. One possibility is by incineration, however the use of hydrolysis is still under consideration. The problem with hydrolysis, noted Reeps, is that it could lead to the production of Schedule 1 chemicals that would generate additional requirements.

18. (C) Reeps provided more detail on the technical discussions, stating that he provided his interlocutors with material on the requirements for the Libyan declaration, including information on facility agreements. With regard to industrial issues, the Libyans have an "interesting interpretation" of the requirements of Article 6 of the CWC (activities not prohibited under the Convention). Reeps said that the best guess now is that there will not be much industry-related work in Libya, with only 3-4 facilities possibly coming under the CWC. The team also discussed the requirements for establishing a national authority, where the Libyans again seem to be well informed. Reeps then provided information on the February 16 visit to Libya, including a detailed information sheet that has been FAXed to AC/CB.

19. (C) With regard to the inspection, Reeps said that the Libyan declaration is due on March 6. After having a few days to assess the document, he thought that the inspection team would depart for Tripoli on March 10. The composition of the team would still be determined, but with the focus on three particular storage facilities, the team hoped to be able to complete its work by around March 20 so that the DG could provide a report to the Executive Council. Should that not be the case, they will provide an interim report that the DG could utilize with the Council.

110. (C) The DG added that the Libyan interlocutors were well aware of the importance of the decision that had been taken and stated that it is irreversible. They also commented that they recognized the importance of having other countries follow their example, and specifically cited Egypt as a country that might be brought around to a reconsideration of its views of the CWC in light of the Libyan decision.

111. (U) Javits sends.
SOBEL